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Mr Chris Warner
Headteacher
Comper Foundation Stage School
Hertford Street
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Dear Mr Warner

Short inspection of Comper Foundation Stage School

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Staff at your school are committed to the welfare of children in the early years. They are always seeking ways to improve the quality of education provided.

Your school is a welcoming community. You and your team are very approachable. Each morning you greet children and their parents into school. Relationships between staff and children are strong. Children separate from their families quickly, demonstrating the extent to which they are eager to start exploring the activities provided.

Your school is outward-looking. You are keen to participate in the latest research to improve the provision. This includes working with Oxford University on studies about young children. For example, you worked with researchers on a project about autistic spectrum disorders, which gave staff a greater understanding of autism. Your school works closely with Oxfordshire Nursery School Group to share best practice with other schools.

At the previous inspection, the assessment of children's progress was identified as an area to improve. Since then you have been engaged in a cycle of improving assessment. A new assessment system has been recently introduced. You recognise that it is still in the early days of clearly showing children's progress.

Another aspect you were asked to improve at the last inspection was the outside

area, which had not been planned to take full account of the needs of children. The outside area is now delightful. It is well used and has been planned to cover all areas of learning. During the inspection some children were absorbed in measuring activities in the mud kitchen. Others enjoyed dancing along to musical videos.

There are a couple of rooms within your school building which are used by Reception children from St Mary and John C of E Primary School. There are several positive aspects to this arrangement. For example, transitions for children from the Nursery into Reception are very smooth. But there is a lack of clarity about Comper's governance arrangements with regard to the Reception children. Both schools are currently in the process of formalising these arrangements.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is an effective culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are diligent in ensuring the safety and welfare of children. Parents report that their children are well cared for.

Staff are well trained in the broad range of aspects related to safeguarding. They know about the signs and symptoms of abuse. Your staff have close partnerships with other professionals, such as health and social care workers. This means that you can ensure that children who may be potentially at risk can receive the earliest possible support.

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. Records, such as those relating to the safe recruitment of staff, are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to check on how well leadership has enhanced the school since the last inspection. We found that many aspects of the school have improved. Communication between staff and parents is a strength. Parents say that you welcome their ideas and suggestions about making the school even better. You have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the few areas still to develop. Attendance is not statutory for the age of the children at your school, but you follow up individual absences well, although you do not yet check to see if there are any patterns of absence for different groups of children.
- We agreed to check the impact of governors on improving the school. We found that governors hold leadership to account very successfully. They are dedicated to ensuring that children receive the best education. Governors are well qualified, and have a useful range of skills that helps them to provide a clear strategic direction for the school.
- We agreed to investigate how well children progress at your school. We found that children make strong progress in their speaking and listening skills. This is because staff take every opportunity to 'get children talking', for example by gently encouraging children to say more than one word when answering questions. Reading skills are well developed. Children enjoy snuggling on bean

bags looking at books with their key worker. Children make good progress in developing their understanding of numbers. They enjoy singing along to counting songs, for instance.

- An area of focus during my visit was how well the school supports children who are two years old. I found that staff are very sensitive to their needs. They understand when a child needs to take a rest or have a snack. Staff provide many different activities for children each day. For example, during the inspection children were creating interesting shapes with dough.
- We agreed to check the impact of the curriculum on children's learning. I found that you provide a diverse range of opportunities. You give children many creative experiences. In music for example, children play with percussion instruments. They have also benefited from having a world-class opera singer performing for them. You ensure that children develop their understanding of the local area, such as when visiting the local shops.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. Those who were spoken to at the beginning of the day say how happy they are with their child's progress. A typical comment was: 'I could not be happier. My son is growing happily and safely.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- check the attendance of different groups of children more carefully
- refine the school's assessment system so that it shows children's progress more clearly
- continue to formalise governance arrangements with regard to the Reception children who are on roll at St Mary and John C of E Primary School.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Oxfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Liz Bowes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders. I also had a discussion with governors, including the chair of governors. A telephone conversation was held with the local authority advisor. Informal discussions were held with parents and children at the start of the school day. The eight responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and four free-text responses were considered. Together, you and I visited all classes and looked at children's online

learning records. A range of school documentation was checked, including: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and plans for improvement; assessment information; the single central record of pre-employment checks; the school's policies and procedures; and minutes of governors' meetings.